



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
June 29, 2007

For More Information, Contact:
Julie Goplin, M.S.
Division of Disease Control
North Dakota Department of Health
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: jgoplin@nd.gov

Proper Handling and Preparation of Food Can Prevent Summertime Foodborne Illnesses

BISMARCK, N.D. – Proper handling and preparation of food can help prevent foodborne illnesses this summer, according to Julie Goplin, foodborne surveillance epidemiologist with the North Dakota Department of Health.

“Summertime is when many people enjoy backyard barbecues, picnics or dinners around a campfire,” Goplin said. “Unfortunately, the incidences of infections associated with foodborne illnesses increase in the summer because of improperly handled food.”

Improper handling and cooking of poultry products and ground beef are common sources of foodborne illnesses such as salmonella, campylobacter and *E. coli*. These diseases can cause diarrhea, bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping, nausea and vomiting. Young children and the elderly are at greatest risk for severe illness such as dehydration, infection of the bloodstream, and kidney failure.

The following tips can help keep summertime food safe:

- Always wash your hands before preparing food, after handling raw foods and before eating. If warm, running water and soap are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cold foods – such as sliced fruits and vegetables, cold salads and meat trays – cold. During summer picnics, it is important to pack a refrigerator thermometer in your cooler to ensure the food in the cooler is kept at 40 degrees F or below.
- Cook foods properly. Cook meat to proper internal temperatures.
 - Poultry breasts to 165 degrees F.
 - Ground beef to 155 degrees F.
 - Pork and fish to 145 degrees F.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before slicing and serving.
- Use pasteurized egg products for items not cooked thoroughly, such as homemade ice cream and raw cookie dough.
- Do not drink unpasteurized milk.

-- more --

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@state.nd.us

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

Some foodborne illnesses – including norovirus, hepatitis A, shigella and E. coli – also can be spread easily in contaminated water and from direct contact with infected people. For that reason, people who have a foodborne illness should not go swimming, work as food handlers or in a health-care setting, or attend day care. Consult with a physician and your local public health department for more information.

Last summer, the North Dakota Department of Health investigated a large shigella outbreak that sickened more than 200 people. Many of the illnesses occurred because of contact with infected people, most likely through improper hand washing. Nine additional foodborne outbreaks were investigated in 2006 that affected another 200 people.

Anyone who experiences symptoms of a foodborne illness should contact his or her physician; anyone who experiences bloody diarrhea should contact his or her physician immediately.

For more information or to report a possible foodborne illness, contact Julie Goplin, North Dakota Department of Health, at 800.472.2180.

-- 30 --

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.